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THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
OF THE  
HOLY COMFORTER

# 3RD SUNDAY OF Easter



**APRIL 14, 2024**

**8:15AM | 10:30AM | HOLY EUCHARIST RITE II**

# **THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH WELCOMES YOU**

## **WELCOME TO ALL NEWCOMERS AND VISITORS**

Please complete the information card and place it in the offering plate or hand it to one of the ushers.

## **WE, THE PEOPLE OF HOLY COMFORTER**

Though very diverse politically and socially, care for each other and care deeply for how our faith is manifested in the community. We believe all people are equal in God's hand. Our nurturing congregation has an appreciation for diverse perspectives and opinions. We grow through a continually evolving and questioning discussion regarding our faith, God, and society. We welcome all, without reservation, into our Christian body to be part of a loving and sharing family.

## **WE CARE**

Please call the church office at (336) 227-4251 if you or someone you know needs visitation, prayers or other assistance because of illness or inability to attend worship service.

## **OUR PARISH MISSION STATEMENT**

To worship God, revealed to us as Creator, as Jesus the Christ, and as the Holy Spirit, and experience God's presence within the church family, nurturing each other through a comprehensive parish program while affirming each other's individual ministries and responding to Jesus' continuing call to minister to others.

## PRELUDE

We Walk by Faith

James Biery

## WELCOME

### OPENING HYMN | 200

Come, ye faithful, raise the strain



- 1 Come, ye faith - ful, raise the strain of tri - um - phant glad - ness!
- 2 'Tis the spring of souls to - day: Christ hath burst his pri - son,
- 3 Now the queen of sea - sons, bright with the day of splen - dor,
- 4 Nei - ther might the gates of death, nor the tomb's dark por - tal,



God hath brought his Is - ra - el in - to joy from sad - ness:  
and from three days' sleep in death as a sun hath ris - en;  
with the roy - al feast of feasts, comes its joy to ren - der;  
nor the watch - ers, nor the seal hold thee as a mor - tal:



loosed from Pha - raoh's bit - ter yoke Ja - cob's sons and daugh - ters,  
all the win - ter of our sins, long and dark, is fly - ing  
comes to glad Je - ru - sa - lem, who with true af - fec - tion  
but to - day a - midst thine own thou didst stand, be - stow - ing



led them with un - mois - tened foot through the Red Sea wa - ters.  
from his light, to whom we give laud and praise un - dy - ing.  
wel - comes in un - wear - ied strains Je - sus' re - sur - rec - tion.  
that thy peace which ev - er - more pass - eth hu - man know - ing.

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

**Officiant** Alleluia. Christ is risen.

**People** *The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.*

*Let us pray.* Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

# GLORIA | S-278



1. Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and  
peace to his peo - ple on earth. 2. Lord God, heaven - ly King, al -  
might - y God and Fa - ther, we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we  
praise you for your glo - ry. 3. Lord Je - sus Christ,  
on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, 4. you  
take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;  
5. you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re -  
ceive our prayer. 6. For  
you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,  
7. you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the  
Ho - ly Spi - rit, in the glo - ry of  
God the Fa - ther. A - men.

**Officiant** The Lord be with you.  
**People** *And also with you.*

## COLLECT

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## ALL CHILDREN ARE INVITED TO FOLLOW THE CRUCIFER TO CHILDREN'S CHAPEL.

### FIRST LESSON

*Acts 3:12-19*

Peter addressed the people, "You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you.

"And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out."

**Reader** The Word of the Lord.

**People** **Thanks be to God.**

### THE RESPONSE

Psalm 4

*Cum invocarem*



1 Answer me when I call, O God, defender of my cause; \*  
you set me free when I am hard-pressed;  
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

2 "You mortals, how long will you dishonor my glory; \*  
how long will you worship dumb idols  
and run after false gods?"

3 Know that the Lord does wonders for the faithful; \*  
when I call upon the Lord, he will hear me.

4 Tremble, then, and do not sin; \*  
speak to your heart in silence upon your bed.

5 Offer the appointed sacrifices \*  
and put your trust in the Lord.

6 Many are saying, "Oh, that we might see better times!" \*  
Lift up the light of your countenance upon us, O Lord.

7 You have put gladness in my heart, \*  
more than when grain and wine and oil increase.

8 I lie down in peace; at once I fall asleep; \*  
for only you, Lord, make me dwell in safety.

## **THE EPISTLE**

*1 John 3:1-7*

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous.

**Reader** The Word of the Lord.

**People** ***Thanks be to God.***

## **SEQUENCE HYMN | 193**

That Easter day with joy was bright

***(Sequence Hymn lyrics on next page)***



1 That Eas - ter day with joy was bright, the  
 2 His ris - en flesh with ra - diance glowed; his  
 3 O Je - sus, King of gen - tle - ness, do  
 4 O Lord of all, with us a - bide in  
 5 All praise, O ris - en Lord, we give to



1 sun shone out with fair - er light, when, to their long - ing  
 2 wound - ed hands and feet he showed; those scars their sol - emn  
 3 thou thy - self our hearts pos - sess that we may give thee  
 4 this our joy - ful Eas - ter - tide; from ev - ery wea - pon  
 5 thee, who, dead, a - gain dost live; to God the Fa - ther



1 eyes re - stored, the a - pos - tles saw their ris - en Lord.  
 2 wit - ness gave that Christ was ris - en from the grave.  
 3 all our days the will - ing tri - bute of our praise.  
 4 death can wield thine own re - deemed for ev - er shield.  
 5 e - qual praise, and God the Ho - ly Ghost, we raise.

The Officiant reads the Gospel, first saying

**Gospeler** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke.

**People** *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

## THE GOSPEL

Luke 24:36-48

Jesus himself stood among the disciples and said to them, "Peace be with you." They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence.

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

**Gospeler** The Gospel of the Lord.

**People** *Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

## THE NICENE CREED

BCP 358

**Officiant and People**

***We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.***

***We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.***

***We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.***

***We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.***

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Form III

BCP 387

*The Leader and People pray responsively*

**Reader** Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

**People** ***That we all may be one.***

**Reader** Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

**People** ***That your Name may be glorified by all people.***

**Reader** We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;

**People** ***That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.***



**Reader** We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;

**People** ***That there may be justice and peace on the earth.***

**Reader** Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

**People** ***That our works may find favor in your sight.***

**Reader** Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

**People** ***That they may be delivered from their distress.***

**Reader** Give to the departed eternal rest.

**People** ***Let light perpetual shine upon them.***

**Reader** We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

**People** ***May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.***

**Reader** Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

Silence

*The People may add their own petitions.*

*The Celebrant adds a concluding Collect.*

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE LIST**

**SYMPATHIES** - For the repose of the soul of Kathy Cusano, and for the comfort of her family and friends including Nancy Christensen.

**MEMBERS** - Doug Peet, Bob Stewart, Audrey Deadmon, Marian Accles, Lidia Serrano, Chappy Moser, Cecelia Walker, Bobby Puett.

**FAMILY AND FRIENDS** - Nicki Bischoff, Bill Cusano, Bill Bates, Lavette Morgan, Glenn Schilke, Dale Norstrom, Catherine Shanahan, Rudy Jordon, Susan Hatfield, Joretta and Jim Norman, Brynja Bowman, Jeff Safrit, Mindy Williams, Aubrey Henderson, Zachary Lopez, Garrett Magon, Mary Doughty, Cindy Rugg, Caryl Barbknecht, Theresa Testa.

**MILITARY** - Patrick Nadolski.

### **A TRANSITION PRAYER FOR HOLY COMFORTER**

Ever-present God,

You call us on a journey to a place we do not know.

We are not where we started.

We have not reached our destination.

We are discovering who we are and where we are going.

Transition is not a comfortable place.

May we continue to remind ourselves of the wonderful resources of this Church

Sanctuary and a warm and welcoming congregation.

Be among us, we pray.

Calm our fears, save us from discouragement.

Encourage us to care for one another.

And help us to stay on course.

Open our hearts to your guidance so that our journey toward calling a new Rector continues as a journey of trust, and faith and love. **Amen.**

## **THE PEACE**

**Officiant** The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**People** **And also with you.**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **OFFERTORY SENTENCE**

### **OFFERTORY ANTHEM**

Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus

*arr. Dan Forrest*

Let us ever walk with Jesus,  
Follow His example pure,  
Through a world that would deceive us,  
Where to sin our hearts are lured.  
Ever in His footsteps treading,  
Living here, yet home above,  
Full of faith and hope and love,  
Let us do our Father's bidding,  
Faithful Lord, abide with me;  
Savior, lead, I follow Thee.

Let us also die with Jesus,  
By His cross He conquered death,  
Freed us from our souls' destruction,  
Quickened us with life's new breath.  
Let us mortify, while living,  
Self and pride, and die to sin,  
And the grave that shuts us in  
Shall but prove the gate to heaven,  
Jesus, here I die to Thee,  
There to dwell eternally.

Let us gladly live with Jesus,  
He is risen from the dead.  
Death is swallowed up in vict'ry,

Jesus, Thou art now our Head.  
Living members of Thy Body,  
Where Thou livest, we shall be,  
Thou wilt keep us constantly,  
Even so, dear Lord, come quickly,  
Jesus, here I live to Thee,  
There to dwell eternally.

Let us ever walk with Jesus.

## **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

Eucharist Prayer D

BCP 372

*The people remain standing.*

**Celebrant**      The Lord be with you.  
**People**          **And also with you.**

**Celebrant**      Lift up your hearts.  
**People**          **We lift them to the Lord.**

**Celebrant**      Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**People**          **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*Then, facing the Holy Table, the Celebrant proceeds*

It is truly right to glorify you, Father, and to give you thanks; for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and for ever.

Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance.

Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we sing,

## **SANCTUS | S-128**

**(Sanctus lyrics on next page)**

Ho - ly, ho - ly,  
 ho - ly Lord, God of power and might,  
 heaven and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho-san-na in the  
 high - est. Bless - ed is he who  
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san-na in the high-est.

*The people stand or kneel. Then the Celebrant continues*

We acclaim you, holy Lord, glorious in power. Your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love. You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might rule and serve all your creatures. When our disobedience took us far from you, you did not abandon us to the power of death. In your mercy you came to our help, so that in seeking you we might find you. Again and again you called us into covenant with you, and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation.

Father, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, he lived as one of us, yet without sin. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy.

To fulfill your purpose he gave himself up to death; and, rising, from the grave, destroyed death, and made the whole creation new. And, that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and rose for us, he sent the Holy Spirit, his own first gift for those who believe, to complete his work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.

When the hour had come for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end; at supper with them he took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you. This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand, awaiting his coming in glory; and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you.

***Celebrant and People***  
***We praise you,***  
***we bless you,***  
***we give thanks to you,***  
***and we pray to you, Lord our God.***

*The Celebrant continues*

Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us, and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ.

Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name.

Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic Church, redeemed by the blood of your Christ. Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace. Remember Michael, our Presiding Bishop, Sam and Jennifer, our Bishops, and all who minister in your Church.

Remember all your people, and those who seek your truth.

Remember all who have died in the peace of Christ, and those whose faith is known to you alone; bring them into the place of eternal joy and light.

And grant that we may find our inheritance with the Blessed Virgin Mary, with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with St. Athanasius and all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

BCP 364

And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

### **Officiant and People**

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

## THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

BCP 364

*The Officiant breaks the consecrated Bread. A period of silence is kept.  
The choir will immediately sing the fraction anthem.*

### FRACTION ANTHEM | S-155



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,  
lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Christ our Pass - o - ver is  
sac - ri - ficed for us; there - fore let us keep the feast.  
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

*Facing the people, the Officiant says the following Invitation.*  
The Gifts of God, for the people of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

*Persons wanting a blessing instead of receiving bread or wine at the Altar may cross their arms over their chest.*

# COMMUNION HYMNS

## 189 | Love's redeeming work is done



1 Love's re - deem - ing work is done, fought the fight, the  
 2 Lives a - gain our glo - rious King; where, O death, is  
 3 Soar we now where Christ has led, fol - lowing our ex -



bat - tle won. Death in vain for - bids him rise;  
 now thy sting? Once he died our souls to save,  
 alt - ed Head; made like him, like him we rise,



Christ has o - pened par - a - dise. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 where thy vic - to - ry, O grave? Al - le - lu - ia!  
 ours the cross, the grave, the skies. Al - le - lu - ia!



al - le - lu - ia!  
 al - le - lu - ia!  
 al - le - lu - (ia!) ia!

## 318 | Here, O my Lord



1 Here, O my Lord, I see thee face to face;  
 2 Here would I feed up - on the Bread of God;  
 3 I have no help but thine; nor do I need  
 4 Mine is the sin, but thine the right - eous - ness;



here would I touch and han - dle things un - seen;  
 here drink with thee the roy - al Wine of heaven;  
 an - oth - er arm save thine to lean up - on;  
 mine is the guilt, but thine the cleans - ing Blood.



here grasp with firm - er hand e - ter - nal grace,  
 here would I lay a - side each earth - ly load,  
 it is e - nough, my Lord, e - nough in - deed;  
 Here is my robe, my re - fuge, and my peace;



and all my wea - ri - ness up - on thee lean.  
 here taste a - fresh the calm of sin for - given.  
 my strength is in thy might, thy might a - lone.  
 thy Blood, thy right - eous - ness, O Lord, my God.

## **POST COMMUNION PRAYER**

BCP 365

*For those attending in person.*

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord, **Amen**

## **PRAYER OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION**

*For those attending remotely.*

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot receive you in the Sacrament of your Body and Blood, come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace, Lord Jesus, and let me never be separated from you. May I live in you, and you in me, in this life and in the life to come. **Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

## **RECESSIONAL | 174**

At the Lamb's high feast we sing

*(Recessional lyrics on next page)*

## **DISMISSAL**

**Officiant** Let us go forth in the name of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

**People** ***Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.***

## **POSTLUDE**

Toccatà in E Major

*BWV 566 | JS Bach*



1 At the Lamb's high feast we sing praise to our vic - to - rious King,  
 2 Where the Pas - chal blood is poured, death's dark an - gel sheathes his sword;  
 3 Might - y vic - tim from on high, hell's fierce powers be - neath thee lie;  
 4 Eas - ter tri - umph, Eas - ter joy, these a - lone do sin de - stroy.

who hath washed us in the tide flow - ing from his pierc - ed side;  
 Is - rael's hosts tri - um - phant go through the wave that drowns the foe.  
 thou hast con - quered in the fight, thou hast brought us life and light:  
 From sin's power do thou set free souls new - born, O Lord, in thee.

praise we him, whose love di - vine gives his sa - cred Blood for wine,  
 Praise we Christ, whose blood was shed, Pas - chal vic - tim, Pas - chal bread;  
 now no more can death ap - pall, now no more the grave en - thrall;  
 Hymns of glo - ry, songs of praise, Fa - ther, un - to thee we raise:

gives his Bo - dy for the feast, Christ the vic - tim, Christ the priest.  
 with sin - cer - i - ty and love eat we man - na from a - bove.  
 thou hast o - pened par - a - dise, and in thee thy saints shall rise.  
 ris - en Lord, all praise to thee with the Spi - rit ev - er be.

## ALTAR FLOWERS

The altar flowers today are given to the Glory of God by Connie and Gene Griner in thanksgiving for the faithful work of Holy Comforter's flower guild and altar guild.

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## COMMITMENT TO MINISTRY

MARCH 31 SERVICE COUNT ..... 8:15AM **13** | 10AM **91** | REMOTE **34**

## COMMITMENT TO FAITHFULNESS

MONDAY APRIL 1 - SUNDAY APRIL 7

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| PLEGGED .....      | <b>\$17,615.00</b> |
| GENERAL FUND ..... | <b>\$350.00</b>    |
| OTHER .....        | <b>\$752.31</b>    |
| <b>TOTAL</b> ..... | <b>\$18,717.31</b> |

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## BISHOP

The Rt. Rev. Sam Rodman, Bishop Diocesan

## LAY MINISTERS

VERGER

Steven Swanner

ORGANIST

Christin Baker

USHERS

8:15AM - Paula Boyd  
10:30AM - Sarah Moore, Stig Egede-Nissen

READERS

8:15AM - Julie Smith  
10:30AM - Sandy Gerow, Jocelyn Safrit

ACOLYTES

8:15AM - Julie Smith  
10:30AM - *CHALICIST* - Max and Adriane Newbauer  
*CRUCIFER* - Max Newbauer  
*LEFT TORCH BEARER* - Adriane Newbauer  
*RIGHT TORCH BEARER* - Annagrace Newbauer  
*GOSPEL BEARER* - Holden Newbauer

VESTRY COUNTERS

Max Newbauer, Pat House

CHILDREN'S CHAPEL

10:30AM - Jim Romer, Mourine Todd

FLOWER GUILD

Connie Griner

ALTAR GUILD

Joanne McClusky, Janice Davis McAdams, Cheryl Miner,  
Tish Murray, Susan Ryan, Julie Smith, Nancy Smith

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE

Nancy Slott, Connie Grinner, Mary Collins,  
Terri Stevens, Cherry Wrenn, Angie Thomas

*During the Easter season, Sermons That Work is pleased to present reflections from some of the newest bishops of The Episcopal Church on the resurrection of our Lord. Check back each week for a brief exploration of how Jesus Christ's rising from the grave changes everything. To listen to this reflection, scan the QR code on this page and subscribe to the Sermons That Work podcast.*

When I was a child, our family often went on summer trips across the country. On one of those trips, we signed up for a guided tour of a deep cavern in Arkansas. There were about a dozen in our group. We followed lit pathways to the deepest place in this large cave, and the guide had us all sit down on benches. Then, she turned out all the lights. We sat in utter and complete darkness, several hundred feet underground, for maybe one minute. Then, she lit a single match, and every eye was instantly focused on the glow of that flame.

The first service of Easter – The Great Vigil – begins with the rubric: In the darkness, fire is kindled. At some moment between sundown on Saturday and sunrise on Sunday, God raised the lifeless body of Jesus from death to life in the tomb. On Saturday night or early Sunday morning, churches around the world annually symbolize and celebrate this joyful moment of Jesus' resurrection by lighting a fire in the dark. The fire is blessed, the Paschal Candle is lit, and then the joyful light is shared as candles held by every person in the congregation are lit from it.

It is truly a joyful light that is shared. The resurrection of Jesus means that God's love for us cannot be contained – even by death or a dark tomb. Sin and death do not have the last word over humanity. God does. And, as the Prayer of Humble Access reminds us, God's property is always to have mercy. With the resurrection of Jesus, death is conquered. Jesus is raised and we who follow him are raised to new and eternal life with him.

This eternal life that is offered to us does not begin when our mortal bodies die. It begins now. The power of Christ's resurrection is available to you and to me now. We no longer must live with old fears, old shames, old mistakes, old brokenness, and old patterns that made us less than God intends for us. Our old lives can give way to God's way of love. In our baptisms, we were buried with Christ in his death and raised to new life with him. We are new creations. Our old shames, old mistakes, old sins, are forgiven, buried, and healed. A new way of life, following our resurrected Lord, is ours right now.



When a match was lit in that dark cavern, every eye turned, every head turned, and almost everyone reoriented their bodies to face that new light. May we so live in the power of Christ's resurrection that our hearts, minds, and bodies are reoriented to God's way of love. May we join our resurrected Lord in the work of making all things new.

**The Rt. Rev. Dr. David G. Read** serves as bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas, the sixteenth bishop to serve in West Texas (the eleventh diocesan). He has jurisdiction over 87 congregations within the diocese, including parishes, missions, and church plants ranging in size from 40 members to 2,000 members.

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